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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 6, 2011

1241

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

I write regarding the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) efforts to reform the Lifeline and Link-Up compensation programs, which are part of the Universal Service Fund. While I support efforts to increase the efficiency of the program, I urge the Commission to avoid new regulations that would create unreasonable barriers for eligible subscribers to obtain service, as well as reforms that would unreasonably disrupt service for current legitimate program participants.

Having a cell phone is a means to a better life for struggling families. It enables them to find and keep employment, contact services, and manage family emergencies. Unfortunately, for some Americans, the cost of traditional cell phone service makes it unattainable. The Lifeline and Link-Up programs help alleviate this problem by providing low-income households with access to telephone service. This access can change their lives for the better, giving them a vital tool for improving their circumstances.

In Minnesota these programs are at the early stages of implementation. Less than 20% of the 450,000 eligible households participate in the USA Lifeline program. Maintaining these programs in a fiscally responsible and efficient manner is critical as the programs are put into effect in Minnesota. I applaud the FCC's efforts to prevent abuse and waste in these programs. The agency's interim order dated June 21, 2011, is a good effort to make sure that a single subscriber can only receive a single benefit. As the agency moves forward, I believe there are other solutions available that will improve the program, but at the same time, not disrupt or inhibit these important programs.

I thank you for your efforts and look forward to working with you on this matter.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

November 10, 2011

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's efforts to reform and strengthen the Universal Service Lifeline/LinkUp program. I appreciate your thoughts on this important program. Your letter has been entered into the record of the Commission's pending Lifeline/LinkUp Reform and Modernization proceeding.

The Commission is evaluating a number of proposals designed to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse, and otherwise improve the Universal Service Fund. At the same time, the Commission is seeking comment on whether any proposals in its *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)* would impose unreasonable barriers to enrollment and participation by eligible consumers and households.

In addition, the Commission recently issued a Public Notice seeking targeted comment on four issues raised in the *Lifeline/Link Up Reform NPRM*, including the design and implementation of a Lifeline/Link-Up broadband pilot; the one-per-residential-address proposal; revising the definition of Link Up; and improving methods for verifying continued eligibility for the program. I believe that the Commission's analysis would benefit from further development of these issues in the record.

I look forward to working with you to ensure access to telecommunications and broadband for all Americans. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Julius Genachowski